

Progress
of
Indian Missions

1906-1916

MRS. H. A. LAVELL

Woman's Missionary Society Methodist Church,
Wesley Buildings, Toronto, Ontario.

Price, 5 cents each.

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THE eye of faith and the heart of love are necessary qualifications for every missionary, but the successful worker among our Indian peoples needs to be a confirmed optimist with unbounded patience and the strong conviction that the salvation and education of the Indian is a splendid investment for both church and state. In this, as in all branches of our missionary work, the great hope lies in the children. To train them in practical work in industrial institutes, to teach them in the schools, to hold them and win their confidence by kindness, care and love has been the aim of our workers from the beginning.

Scanning the reports of the years intervening between 1906-1916, we note progress on all the fields. Large additions to the staff, expansions of the work, changes among the missionaries and teachers have all brought good and lasting results; but when we remember that there are still, according to Government returns, 8,290 Indians of aboriginal beliefs and

about 11,000 more, unclaimed by any church, giving us nearly 20,000 non-Christian Indians in Canada, we must admit that our work is by no means done. In all our Indian Homes and Industrial Institutes the aim of the teachers has been to inspire in the girls and boys a desire to live pure, noble lives and to give them a glimpse of what a true Christian home, with all its helpful influences may be. Some time each day is given to Bible Study and religious instruction, but greater results are gained by personal contact—quiet talks on spiritual matters, the constant keeping before the boys and girls of high ideals as well as the consistent life and conduct of the teachers.

Crosby Girls' Home

On all the missions, interest has been stimulated by preparation for the Christmas fête, sales of work, industrial exhibits, special entertainments and the practice of Christmas and Easter Music. The girls in the Homes are encouraged to make Christmas gifts for their own people and thus they are taught the joy of giving. The Mission Band organized in the Crosby Girls' Home, Port Simpson, has for its motto "Do something for somebody else." Under Miss Clark's supervision in 1906-07 the members took up the study of the Islands of the Pacific and were much interested and that year every one was a subscriber to the Palm Branch. Since 1910, the Mission Band funds have been raised by the sale of fancy work done by the girls as a recreation, and the demand is always greater than the supply. In 1912 the Crosby Home Mission Band raised \$86.00 and last year it was reported as still in a flourishing condition with regular, well-attended meetings.

In 1910, a new play-room for the girls was among the improvements of the Crosby Girls' Home, thus relieving the teachers of a great nervous strain. Basket-ball teams were organized and healthful games of many sorts encouraged which meant much to the health and happiness of the pupils. The Mission Boat "Thomas Crosby" gave the occupants of this Home on more than one occasion, a delightful day's outing, calling at Green Island Lighthouse, and some of the lonely places along the coast and showing the kind of work this Mission boat is doing.

Kitamaat Home

After the destruction of the Kitamaat Home by fire in May 1906, our work was practically at a stand-still for some months until funds could be collected and arrangements made for the re-building of the Home. During that break in the work, all the girls over fifteen were lost to our school by marrying, so when the new Home opened in the fall of 1908 it was with a new matron and for the most part, new pupils. As a tribute to the faithfulness and devotion of Miss Long, it was decided to call the new Home the Elizabeth Long Memorial Home.

The records of the years show advance in all lines—additions to the staff, increase in equipment, needed improvements such as more dormitory room, an open air play-house and extensive work on the grounds. A small garden is cultivated around the Home, and it is hoped in this way to create a desire in the minds of the children to have garden plots at their own homes. The Indians have about 400 acres of land at Kitamaat and not a quarter of an acre is under cultivation.

Besides the ordinary school subjects, the children receive religious instruction and are taught ethics, calisthenics, music, housework, sewing, laundry and gardening. The teachers insist on the children speaking English and a reward system has been instituted which has helped very much in this respect. Music has great charms for Indian boys and girls. For some years at Kitamaat there has been a fine band of twenty instruments, and some of the girls play so well that, by turns, they take charge of the organ at prayer-meeting and Sunday services.

In April, 1910, a nurse deaconess was sent to join the forces and she was indeed a welcome addition to the community, as the nearest doctor was 150 miles away. The nurse is now a very necessary member of the Home staff and the teachers are thus greatly relieved of responsibility during sickness. Recent reports show both the Auxiliary and Mission Band at Kitamaat to be in a flourishing condition. The Mission Band funds for 1913-14 were over \$90.00 and the year following they were \$101.60.

Coqualeetza Industrial Institute

The same cheering story of progress comes from the Coqualeetza Industrial Institute at Chilliwack. Every year the attendance continues good and the atmosphere of the Institute is like that of a Christian home. Both boys and girls are taught to cook under the guidance of an experienced teacher. The girls take their turn in the sewing-room, laundry and kitchen while the boys are taught all kinds of farm work, gardening, carpentering and shoe-making.

The superintendent of Indian schools, the Indian agents and Missionaries on the reserves have all recognized the value of the training at Coqualeetza by expressions of opinion as to the thrift, responsiveness, and commendable modes of life of nearly all our ex-pupils. The great problem in connection with the education of Indian children is the health problem. Tuberculosis has played havoc with both old and young and this dread disease and the drink evil are the two greatest foes of the Redman. Deaconess work has been done in this valley since 1908 among the women and little children as well as among the sick.

Rev. Mr. Raley was transferred from Port Simpson to Chilliwack during the year 1913-14 and expressed himself as deeply impressed by the imposing building at Coqualeetza and the model agricultural farm of 90 acres surrounding it in the fertile valley of the Fraser. He deplores the lack of accommodation for more than 110 pupils when so many are seeking admittance and 200 could easily be found to take advantage of the study and training. At Coqualeetza, the Boy Scout organization is doing good work. Great interest has been shown in the war and every evening the movements of the armies of the Empire are shown on the blackboard by the aid of maps and diagrams. About \$150.00 was raised last year in the Institute for the Patriotic Fund.

Hospital Work

Our Medical Work among the Indians has been almost entirely the growth of the last ten years. In the summer of 1906 the Hospital at Bella Bella,

River's inlet was completed and ready for occupation before the close of the season. The nurses who had before that been looking after patients in the cabins and cannery houses and working at a great disadvantage, moved into their new quarters with a song in their hearts.

In 1908-09 we have reports from three hospitals, and since then, two branch hospitals have been established,—Port Simpson Hospital with a branch at Port Essington, Bella Bella Hospital with a summer branch at River's Inlet and Hazelton Hospital at Hazelton, B.C.

In each of these, one or more nurses are supported by the Woman's Missionary Society, and their faithful, devoted work is beyond all praise. Part of the time each year, these hospitals have been taxed to their utmost capacity, construction work on the Grand Trunk Pacific adding to the patients at Hazelton for a year or two. The nurse at Rossville Mission, Norway House tells of a great and much needed work among the Indian women. In 1909 she writes that the ignorance of mothers in the care of their children is a very serious problem. So many Indian babies die. "For one thing" she says "they are afraid of water. Many a child grows up without ever having a bath from birth. One old woman said she had lived to be ninety and never had a bath. She didn't see why there was any need." The care of tuberculosis patients is an ever-pressing problem with Indian workers and missionaries. Fresh-air treatment is so necessary and those with tubercular trouble must be kept apart from other patients.

In 1908 a tubercular tent ward was built in connection with the Port Simpson Hospital, and in 1915 Mr. Raley writing of the good health of the pupils at Coqualeetza said "We believe greatly in fresh air. Forty of the boys sleep in open-air dormitories of the most approved design and sixty attend school in an open-air classroom."

Missions in the North Land

Work in the North Land has been carried on by one worker first at Cross Lake and now at Nelson House. Between seven and eight hundred visits were made at Cross Lake in 1912-13 chiefly on the sick, and added to this was dispensary work and the giving out of medicine and nourishment.

As the need was felt to be greater at Nelson House, Miss Jackson was transferred to this mission, travelling from Cross Lake by dog-team. The journey took four days and she reached Nelson House December 14th, 1913. Here she has passed a busy two years working among the sick and trying to help the girls and women to make their homes clean and cheerful. She has taken time, however, to organize a Mission Band, hoping to implant in the children a love for others and a desire to help them.

If the work on all these fields seems slow, it is leaving its impress, and the lives of our many consecrated workers cannot but tell for good on the Indian peoples, once so hopeless and neglected.